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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Hubert Work, Secretary

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY George Otis Smith, Director

Water-Supply Paper 596-B

# QUALITY OF WATER OF COLORADO RIVER IN 1925-1926

BY

W. D. COLLINS

AND

C. S. HOWARD

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# QUALITY OF WATER OF COLORADO RIVER IN 1925-1926

# By W. D. COLLINS and C. S. HOWARD

## SAMPLES

Most of the analyses given in this report represent composites of daily samples collected by the observers at United States Geological Survey gaging stations on Colorado River at Grand Canyon and Topock, Ariz. These stations are operated under the direction of W. E. Dickinson, district engineer of the Geological Survey at Tucson, Ariz., who personally collected some of the samples at other points and arranged for the collection of others.

At Grand Canyon samples from August 18, 1925, to September 30, 1926, were taken by B. S. Barnes; from October 25, 1925, to September 3, 1926, by D. H. Barber; and from September 4 to September 30, 1926, by Kenneth C. McCarter. At Topock samples from August 14, 1925, to July 13, 1926, were taken by James E. Klohr; from July 14 to July 27, 1926, by Kenneth C. McCarter; and from July 28 to September 30, 1926, by James E. Klohr. The samples for the single composite from Yuma were taken by P. J. Preston, superintendent of the irrigation project of the United States Bureau of Reclamation at Yuma. Other samples were taken by D. A. Dudley in connection with measurements of discharge at points in the river system. The points at which samples were taken are shown in Figure 6.

All the samples were collected in 4-ounce bottles, which were sent to the laboratory in Washington for analysis. For the composites a single bottle was filled each day, and the date and point of collection were marked on the bottle. Every effort was made to take samples that would truly represent the river water as to its content of dissolved mineral matter. Single samples for analysis consisted of four or eight bottles collected at one time. The continuity of collection of samples and the completeness of the analyses make the information in this report more comprehensive than that given in previous reports.<sup>1</sup>

33

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Forbes, R. H., The river irrigating waters of Arizona, their character and effects: Arizona Agr. Exper. Sta. Bull. 44, 1902. Stabler, Herman, Some stream waters of the western United States, with chapters on sediment carried by the Rio Grande and the industrial application of water analyses: U. S. Geol. Survey Water-Supply Paper 274, 1911. Scofield, C. S., Salt content of Colorado River: Eng. News Record, vol. 97, pp. 131-132, 1926.

## METHODS OF ANALYSIS

C. S. Howard made all the analyses by the methods regularly used in the United States Geological Survey, which agree essentially with those recommended in "Standard methods of water analysis" published by the American Public Health Association.

The 4-ounce samples were allowed to stand in the laboratory till the suspended matter settled, leaving the liquid above apparently free from even traces of silt. Composite samples for 7-day periods



FIGURE 6.—Map of Colorado River drainage basin showing sampling

'were collected in flasks by drawing the clear liquid from the individual bottles through a siphon, without disturbing the sediment.

A sample of 5 cubic centimeters was taken from each small bottle for a chloride determination, but the results are not given in the table. They served as a check on the result obtained in the examination of the composite.

In the early part of the work the silt was washed from all the bottles of a set into an evaporating dish, which was placed on the steam bath. After the residue was dry it was heated in the oven at 180° C. for one or two hours. This heating made no significant change

in the weight of the residue, and later the heating in the oven was discontinued. For most of the samples the weight of the suspended material in each bottle was found after drying on the steam bath. Correction was made for the weight of the soluble salts in the original water (usually 5 to 8 cubic centimeters) transferred from the bottle to the evaporating dish with the silt. The silt was washed from the bottle into the dish with distilled water. The quantities of silt reported in the table for composite samples are nearly all averages of the determinations for the daily samples.

A sample of 500 cubic centimeters of the clear composite was evaporated to dryness in platinum, and the residue was weighed after heating 12 or 18 hours at 180° C. Silica was determined, and the filtrate was divided into two parts. Iron was precipitated from one part and determined colorimetrically as thiocyanate, calcium was determined by titration of the oxalate with permanganate, and magnesium was weighed as pyrophosphate. From the other part sulphate was precipitated and weighed as barium sulphate, the mixed chlorides were weighed, and for most of the samples potassium was determined by weighing the platinum resulting from reduction of the potassium platinic chloride. If potassium was not determined, the total weight of mixed chlorides was calculated to sodium. Bicarbonate, chloride, and nitrate were determined by standard methods. No carbonate was found in any sample.

The percentage error of each analysis was calculated by dividing the difference between the sums of the equivalents of the bases and acids by the total sum. The calculations showed all the analyses to be well within the limits that are found for careful analytical work.

The weight reported as "residue on evaporation" is consistently higher than the sum of the determined constituents. This difference is commonly found in the analysis of waters that carry comparatively large quantities of calcium and sulphate.

# COMPOSITION OF WATER OF COLORADO RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES

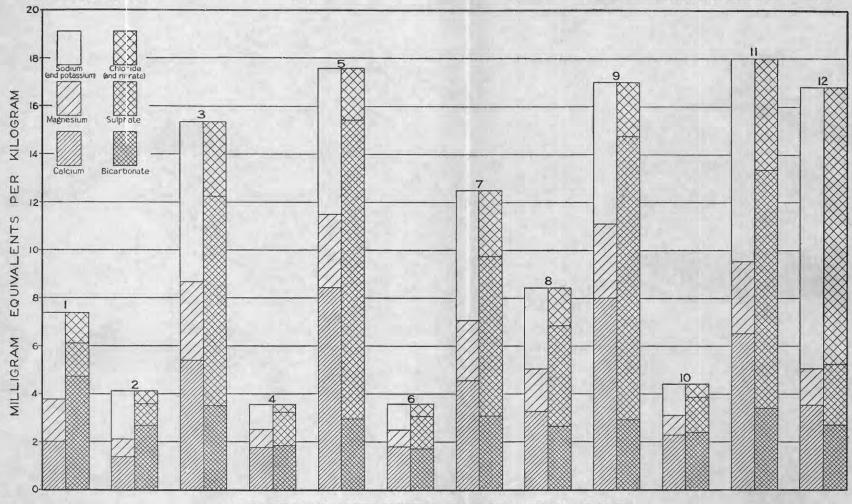
The accompanying table gives all the individual analyses made for this report and two averages for Colorado River at Grand Canyon, which are shown with some of the analyses in Plate 6. The dates show the number of daily samples in each composite. Samples were collected each day at Grand Canyon and at Topock, but some samples were lost in transit. A few that contained hydrogen sulphide when received were rejected, because the hydrogen sulphide suggested decomposition of sulphate and possible change in the bicarbonate. The results for dissolved solids are sums of the constituents determined, with the bicarbonate divided by 2.03 to obtain the equivalent carbonate. The total hardness is the calcium carbonate equivalent

to the calcium and magnesium together. The noncarbonate hardness is the total hardness minus the quantity of calcium carbonate equivalent to the bicarbonate. The mean discharge is that for the 7-day period represented by each analysis for Grand Canyon and Topock. The quantity of dissolved solids in tons per day is obtained by multiplying the dissolved solids in parts per million by the discharge in second-feet and the factor 0.002697. In other publications the quantity of dissolved material in the river has been calculated from the results of determinations of the residue on evaporation, which is always greater than the anhydrous dissolved mineral matter.

Analysis 65 in the table, which is shown as diagram 7 of Plate 6, is the average of the 51 analyses for Colorado River at Grand Canyon from October 9, 1925, to September 30, 1926. Analysis 65 and diagram 7 represent accurately the composition of water that would be contained in a vessel or reservoir that had received equal quantities of water from the river each day of the period covered by the analyses.

Analysis 66 is a weighted average of analyses 14 to 64. The quantities of the different constituents in each analysis were multiplied by the mean discharge for the period represented by the analysis. The sum of the 51 products for each constituent was divided by the sum of the discharges to obtain the weighted average given as analysis 66. This analysis and diagram 8 represent approximately the composition of water that would be found in a reservoir containing all the water that had reached Grand Canyon during the period considered, after thorough mixing in the reservoir. This shows obviously better water than that represented by analysis 65 and diagram 7, because at times of high discharge the river carries the least amount of dissolved solids. In analysis 65 and diagram 7 the waters represented by diagrams 5 and 6 have equal weight; in analysis 66 and diagram 8 the water represented by diagram 6 has over three times the weight of that represented by diagram 5. cause the composite samples for analysis were made from equal daily samples, the analyses themselves do not represent accurately the water that would be found in a reservoir containing the whole flow of the river for the period covered by an individual analysis. The error due to this effect is not great, but its tendency is to make analysis 66 and diagram 8 show more dissolved mineral matter than would be found in the water of a reservoir storing the whole flow of the river for a year.

The analyses for Topock show the water to have about the same content of dissolved mineral matter there as at Grand Canyon. This is brought out in Figure 7, which shows the dissolved mineral matter at Grand Canyon and Topock, with the discharge at Grand Canyon. The discharge at Topock is so near that at Grand Canyon that it is omitted to avoid confusion. The dissolved mineral matter shown in Figure 7 is not the residue on evaporation, but the sum of



# COMPOSITION OF RIVER WATERS IN ARIZONA AND CALIFORNIA

128 in table.

- Owens River at Charlies Butte, near Tinemaha, Calif. Composite sample August 7-16, 1908, U. S. Geol. Survey Water-Supply Paper 237, p. 121.
   Owens River at Charlies Butte, near Tinemaha, Calif. Composite sample April 29 to May 8, 1908. U. S. Geol. Survey Water-Supply Paper 237, p. 121.
   Colorado River at Lees Ferry, Ariz. January 11, 1926. Analysis 1 in table.
   Colorado River at Lees Ferry, Ariz. Composite sample June 13-19, 1926. Analysis 7 in table.
   Colorado River at Grand Canyon, Ariz. Composite sample June 13-19, 1926. Analysis 14 in table.
   Colorado River at Grand Canyon, Ariz. Composite sample June 11-17, 1926. Analysis 49 in table.
   Colorado River at Grand Canyon, Ariz. Average of 51 analyses of composite samples October 9, 1925, to September 30, 1926. Analysis 65 in table.

- 8. Colorado River at Grand Canyon, Ariz. Weighted average of analyses of composite samples October 9, 1925, to September 30, 1926. Analysis 66 in table.

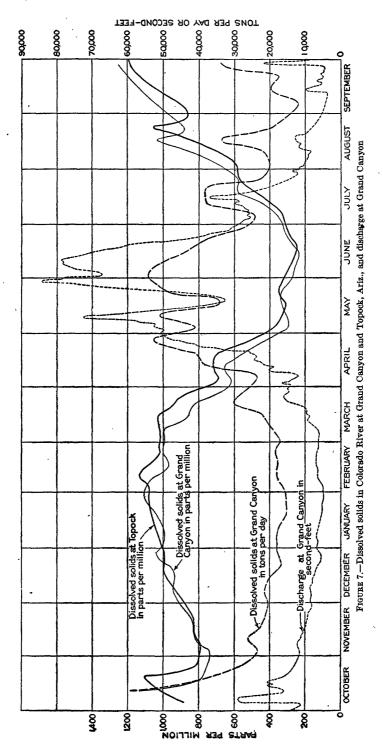
  9. Colorado River at Topock, Ariz. Composite sample October 16-22, 1925. Analysis 76 in table.

  10. Colorado River at Topock, Ariz. Composite sample June 18-24, 1926. Analysis 112 in table.

  11. Colorado River at Yuma, Ariz. Composite sample September 22-30, 1926. Analysis 127 in table.

  12. Little Colorado River at Grand Falls, Ariz. Composite sample December 7-9, 1925. Analysis

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the determined constituents with the bicarbonate calculated to carbonate.

Of the 137 analyses in the table, 113 represent samples from Grand Canyon and Topock. The samples from other points have only the value of occasional samples and can not serve for calculation of the quantities of material carried by the river. Consideration of the discharge at the time of collection in comparison with the discharge throughout the year will give some basis for an opinion as to whether a given analysis may represent average or extreme concentration of dissolved mineral matter.

### SUSPENDED MATTER

The figures given for suspended matter are accurate for the samples as received. The samples were, however, taken without any special precautions to make them represent accurately the silt being carried by the river. It is possible, therefore, that the use of these results n computations may lead to incorrect conclusions. Work on the silt problem, which is still under way, may make it possible to use the results published in this paper, either with or without corrections, as a reliable basis for calculations.

# ANALYSES

Analyses of water from Colorado River and certain tributaries

[C. S. Howard, analyst. Analytical results in parts per million]

Colorado River at Lees Ferry, Ariz.

Dis- solved solids	(tons per day)	16, 100 16, 100 16, 100 16, 100 16, 100 16, 100 17, 100 18, 100 18, 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100
Mean	feet)	8,750 8,750 8,770 8,770 8,770 8,770 8,700 8,700 100
Hardness as CaCOs (calculated)	Noncar- bonate	288 222 588 588 588 588 588 1188 1168
Harc C (calc	Total	428 426 176 176 176 176 178 178 178 178 178 178 178 178 178 178
Dis-	solids	968 937 937 937 937 525 525 645 725 725 725 725 725 725 725 726 726 726 726 726 726 726 726 726 726
Nitrate radicle	(NO3)	15 8.2 8.2 17ace. Trace. 747. 26 . 26
Chlo-	(CI)	88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88
Sul- phate	(SO4)	414 428 428 428 428 76 76 76 76 88 88 185 88
Bicar- bonate	(HCOs)	123 123 123 133 134 135 137 137 137 137 137 137 137 137 137 137
Potas-	(K	88 7.88 2.12 2.12 2.11 2.11 2.11 2.11 2.11 2
Sodium	(rya)	148 110 132 23 23 24 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25 25
Mag- nesium	(Mg)	41 43 43 43 10 10 8.9 10 16
Cal-	(Ca)	108 98 98 98 98 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88 88
Iron	(ag)	0.19 .321 .348 .488 .190 .10
Silica	( <b>E</b> OIS)	02 11 11 11 12 12 13 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14
Residue	evap- oration	1, 012 997 658 325 252 268 282 282 282 434
Sus- pended	matter *	1, 638 1, 940 6, 300 1, 940 1, 300 1,
Date of collection		Jan. 11, 1926.  Reb. 26. Mar. 29. May 24, 26-28, 30. May 31 to June 6. June 13-19. June 13-19. June 13-19. June 10. July 10.
) Z		12842001

Ariz.
Canyon,
Grand
at
River
Colorado

Aug. 23–29, 1925. 25, 400 Sept. 5–8. 30, 500	1,157	125	0.46	149	888	091		227	538	86.58	5.0	1, 121	528 510	342	17, 100	51, 700 79, 000
	1.218	13	82	120	88	138		181	607	88	Trace.	1, 135	4 183 183	432	19,100	
	823	ន	\$	105	8	- 26	8.8	176	362	29	4.0	28	988	241	17,800	٠.
3, 140	787	ଛ	88.	\$	- 8	105	4.2	171	331	8	5.0	757	358	218	13,400	
1, 510	922	8	.34	8	33	104	5.6	174	315	8		740	356	214	11, 900	
2,050	828	22	. 16	66	80	126		195	342	91	4.2	815	370	211	11, 900	- :
1, 410	862	12	. 14	105	æ	128		212	347	8	4.1	828	398	22	10, 300	т.
1,040	688	14	15	8	36	136		203	355	108	4.2	853	398	231	9,320	٠.
,		18	₽.	10,2	40	132	6.6	212	357	125	11	106	424	220	8, 510	
		75	. 14	001	41	146	8.0	211	385	128	4.7	178	418	245	8, 590	
791		প্ত	. 14	001	42	146	ος ος	211	377	130	6.3	937	422	540	7, 950	
546		16	Ξ.	103	43	152	9.3	210	383	139	80	096	434	262	6, 570	т.
517	_	21	.12	112	47	163	6.6	220	415	158	6.8	1,043	473	292	6,340	
Salculat	ed.				b Incl	ludes 19 parts o	arts of si	lica, the	average f	or analyses 1-t	'Ses 1-5 8	and 7-10.				

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Analyses of water from Colorado River and certain tributaries—Continued

# Colorado River at Grand Canyon, Ariz.-Continued

	•
Dis- solved solids (tons per day)	######################################
Mean discharge (second- feet)	&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&&
Hardness as CaCOs (calculated) Otal Noncar-	252 252 252 252 252 252 252 252 252 252
Hardness CaCO (calculate	\$
Dis- solved solids	2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1,
Nitrate radicle (NO <sub>8</sub> )	111 111 112 113 114 114 115 115 116 117 117 117 117 117 117 117 117 117
Chlo- ride radicle (Cl)	######################################
Sul- phate radicle (SO <sub>4</sub> )	88 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 2
Bicar- bonate radicle (HCO <sub>3</sub> )	28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 28 2
Potassium (K)	後後で 後ろてみない たてみておれる女女女女女女子なみないでみな女女女女 のひてろ よちよものよりのしてちのめもてめりころのちろうちょう
Sodium (Na)	28258283 1215625283 121762526553488888888888888888888888888888888888
Mag- nesium (Mg)	\$44444444888888844754455551484888884
Cal. cium (Ca)	9515965115166888888888888888888888888888
Iron (Fe)	
Silica (SiO <sub>2</sub> )	8255572888874858488888888888888888888888
Residue on evap- oration	200 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000
Sus- pended matter	1, 1,447,5,61,9,5,6,4,6,9,4,1,1, 4,9,4,4,8,4,4,5,6,6,1,6,1,6,1,6,1,6,1,6,1,6,1,6,1,6,1
Date of collection	Jan 1-7, 1926. Jan 8-10, 12, 14 Jan 12-28. Jan 29-31, Feb. 2, 4 Jan 29-31, Feb. 2, 4 Jeb. 12-28. Feb. 19-25. Mar. 19-26. Mar. 19-26. Mar. 26 to Apr. 1 Apr. 28 to Apr. 1 Apr. 28 to Apr. 1 Apr. 28 to Apr. 1 Apr. 29 to Apr. 1 Apr. 29 to Apr. 1 Apr. 29 to Apr. 19-26. Apr. 19-27. Apr. 19-28. Apr. 32-29. Apr. 19-28. Apr. 32-29. Apr. 19-28. Apr. 19-28. Apr. 19-29. Apr. 29-29. Apr. 19-29. Apr. 29-29. Apr. 19-29. Apr. 29-29. Apr. 37 To Sept. 2
N ON	828888888888888888888888888888888888888

		•
17, 600 33, 500		4484484888948444844444848 34444444848484844444444 3688489888888888888888888888888888888888
5, 520 9, 940 19, 900		e c c a 4 4 a c c c a c a c a c a c a c a
328 350 196 121		288 282 282 282 282 282 282 282 282 282
504 536 350 251		825558888888888888888888888888888888888
1, 185 1, 252 768 523		1, 1914 1, 1916 1, 191
3.1. 3.5 5.16 1.16		24.4.7.7.2.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0.0
157 160 98 98		1888 2228 888 888 888 888 888 888 888 88
201 201		8.85
214 227 188 159	Ariz.	166 ptessium
4.5 7.0 7.0 7.7	Topock,	युद्ध
198 213 120 • 75	River at	## 199   199
40 31 21 21	Colorado E	
88 88 88 89	වී	100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100 100
8.8.8.		######################################
16 19 19 19		\$2522222222222222222222222222222222222
1, 262 1, 414 806 546		858 888 888 888 888 888 888 888 888 888
8, 660 32, 800		7,538,82,138,832,0,40,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80,80
Sept. 17-23   Sept. 24-30   Average of analyses 14 to 64.   Meighted average of analyses   14-64 (see p. 38).	ı	Aug. 22-27.  Aug. 22-27.  Aug. 22-27.  Aug. 22-27.  Sopt. 4-10.  Sopt. 1-17.  Sopt. 1-17.  Sopt. 1-17.  Sopt. 1-17.  Sopt. 25-10.  Sopt. 25-10
8288		\$

Analyses of water from Colorado River and certain tributaries—Continued
Colorado River at Topock, Ariz.—Continued

	Dis- solved solids	(tons per day)	8,73,12,48,48,48,48,48,48,48,48,48,48,48,48,48,				11, 300		25 28 28 29 29 24 24
	Mean discharge	(sect)	47.17.77.77.79.79.79.79.79.79.79.79.79.79.79	11,800 11,800 10,400	5,520 6,160 5,670		3, 660		82828 8188 828 848 85 848 848 848 848 848 848 848 848
	Hardness as CaCO <sub>3</sub> (calculated)	Noncar- bonate	27 4 4 2 2 3 3 3 4 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5	222222	211 267 319 333		308		118 52 58 97 135 151 151 107 17
	Hard Ca (calcu	Total	188 1158 1158 1173 173 222 222	288 288 288 288 288 288 288 288 288 288	384 432 482 511		481		255 1156 1771 203 252 252 337 837 860 95
	Dis-	solids	2586 272 288 272 288 207 298 298	1,050,050,050	1, 024 1, 141 1, 141 1, 190	ľ	1, 142		997 545 602 730 730 1,332 1,178 1,178 340
	Nitrate radicle	(NO <sub>2</sub> )	0. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28. 28		16.634 06.14 185		6.5		2,3 1,4 1,6 1,9 1,8 Trace. Trace.
	Chlo- ride	(CI)	· 888488848	324841	121 150 166 144		172		408 202 224 224 365 510 505 109
100	Sul- phate	(8O4)	22 88 22 89 109 146 146	288 281 284 486 486	364 488 488 538		475		122 65 67 100 205 277 277 40
Continue	Bicar- bonate	(HCOs)	140 139 134 146 143 143 144	165 165 167 207	212 201 199 217	riz.	209	Little Colorado River at Grand Falls, Ariz.	1237 1377 1377 128 228 286 286 286 286 286
, Ariz.	Potas-	<u>8</u>	40001-000 07-000-07-0	ir.⊙⊗ir.⊗i⊿ 0⊣401080	i4440 00004	Yuma, A	9.1	Grand F	00000000000000000000000000000000000000
HODDOT 1	Sodium	(1)	\$258834F	27. 102 127 157	157 184 195 200	Colorado River at Yuma, Ariz.	189	River at	263 1137 1148 1186 226 2352 446 339 829
Colorado Kiver at 10pock, Ariz.—Continued	Mag- nestum	(Mg)	15 13 10 12 17 17 17	38282	3233	olorado	38	olorado I	25 25 26 26 27 27 27
olorado	Cal-	(Ca)	333448435 344444	878 878 761 181 181 181 181 181 181 181 181 181 1	98 124 129	٥	130	Little C	114488821228
	Iron	9	0. 2.4.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.2.	82488	រដឋន		0.26		11.22.23.386
	Silica	(2016)	28224282	44. 6.0 4.7.7.6	12882		10		692242753
	Residue		352 289 279 318 350 428	624 640 744 914 1, 127	1,243		1, 206		936 556 605 758 758 1, 346 1, 171 1, 171 344
	Sus- pended	matter	6,6,7,4,4,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,6,	, %, e, 4, c, %, r, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6,	4,750 15,750 15,700		7,380		1, 040 1, 340 1, 340 474 470 704 3, 710 1, 440
	Date of collection		May 28 to June 3. June 4-10. June 4-10. June 18-24. June 18-24. June 2-8. July 2-8. July 9-15. July 14-9-16.	July 23-20 July 30-10 July 30 to Aug. 5. Aug. 13-19 Aug. 30-30 Aug. 30-30	Sept. 3-0 Sept. 10-16 Sept. 17-23 Sept. 24-30		Sept. 22-30, 1926		Dec. 7-9, 1925. Dec. 11-15. Dec. 11-25. Dec. 21-25. Dec. 28-29. Jan. 12, 1926. Feb. 18. May 18.
	Z o		651111111	2282828 2282828	22222		127		822822222222 8222222222222

					Gila	River a	Gila River at Gillespie Dam, Ariz.	e Dam,	Ariz.								
Feb. 27, 1928. Apr. 16.	3,410	2,827	88	0.09	162 136	8.5	136	89.	312	101	1, 167	5.2	2,748 674	696 259	100	3, 460	274 6, 290
					San	fuan Riv	San Juan River at Goodridge, Utah	odridge,	Utsh	-							
Mar. 22, 1926	1	3, 270 454 14	14	0.14	19	80	45	5.9	145	206	14	0.56	444	250	131		

